

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2022



FARMERS HELPING FARMERS

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PAPUA NEW GUINEA ELECTIONS

& MORE!

PIFON WELCOMES HAWAII ULU COOPERATIVE

“We couldn’t be more excited to join PIFON and work more closely with its members”

The Hawai'i Ulu Cooperative is the first Hawaii based farmer organisation to join the Pacific Farmer Organisations since the opening of its US office late last year.



Hawai'i Ulu Cooperative volunteers plant rows of pumpkin and kalo huli between young ulu (breadfruit) trees CREDIT : Hawai'i Ulu Cooperative

"I am delighted to announce that our board of directors approved the Hawai'i Ulu Cooperative as a Farmer Organisation member from the island of Hawai'i and we welcome them to the family," said Kyle Stice, executive director of Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network.

Hawai'i Ulu Cooperative is a farmer-owned business working to revitalize ulu (breadfruit) as a viable crop and dietary staple by empowering farmers as change-makers in Hawai'i's food system.

The Cooperative was formed in 2016 with 9 small, diversified growers on Hawai'i island and has grown to over 125 member-farms on three islands — Hawai'i Island, Maui and O'ahu — and is now the foremost breadfruit farmer organisation in Hawai'i.

"We couldn't be more excited to join PIFON and start working more closely with its members from around the Pacific.

This community of farmer organizations is vital for knowledge sharing, advocacy and strengthening the viability of smallholder, family farms in our region. We are honored to be PIFON's first Hawai'i member and look forward to many collaborations to come!" said Dana Shapiro, general manager of the Hawai Ulu Cooperative.

The Pacific Farmer Organisations currently serve 25 farmer organisations across 12 Pacific Island countries reaching over 80,000 members in addition to 5 associate members.

The addition of the Hawai'i Ulu Cooperative is expected to further enrich the opportunities for learning and collaboration between Pacific Farmer Organisations particularly around important technical areas such as breadfruit production, processing and marketing.

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Tonga set for strong recovery

“The provision of items and services has given growers a much-needed head start”



Assistance has been given to twenty-six [26] Nishi Trading growers affected by the Volcanic eruption CREDIT : Nishi Trading Limited

Tonga's agricultural sector recovery from the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption is set to be strong.

A report by Nishi Trading Limited says the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption, tsunami and ashfall caused an estimated TOP \$39M in damages in the agricultural sector, heavily impacting the livelihoods of growers.

However, it reported prospects for growers had brightened with activity returning under the Post Volcanic Recovery Assistance by the Pacific Farmer Organisations.

Nishi Trading Limited has to date facilitated in the provision of 26 growers with farming equipment, fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides as well as seeds as part of key plans to restore livelihoods and food and nutrition security.

Project manager Jenny Nishi shared shipping delays on incoming equipment delayed initial plans scheduled for June, however she said the 26 growers have returned to work on the farm having received the items from the Post Volcanic Recovery Assistance.

“In addition to the items provided, 16 growers also received aid in the form of services such as ploughing and slashing where most of the funds were allocated.”

Jenny Nishi said as the assistance scheme nears its completion: “The provision of items and services of the Post Volcanic Recovery Assistance by Pacific Farmers Organisation has given growers a much-needed head start in the recovery of their farms.”

EMPOWERING FARMERS

Modules launched to help farmers

Providing sustainable livelihoods

A guide for farmers and trainers comprising a series of 8 training modules and regarded as “provisional” (in that they can be updated as additional information is received from stakeholders) has been launched by Pacific Farmer Organisations.

The late lead author and agricultural economist, Dr Andrew McGregor said it would empower farmers “to provide sustainable livelihoods for their families, now and into the future.”

The late lead author and agricultural economist, Dr Andrew McGregor said it would empower farmers “to provide sustainable livelihoods for their families, now and into the future.”

“The modules specifically focus on Fiji and other Pacific Island countries, with the emphasis being on the people who will implement the practices — the farmers,” he added.

The series of written modules is supported by short videos and introduce sustainable cropping practices that push farmers to consider the present and future climate, economic and environment challenges as well as opportunities.

Fiji's Tutu Rural Training Centre on the island of Taveuni has commenced trialing the modules with its own 'training of trainers' program with the support of Pacific Farmer Organisations.

Executive director, Kyle Stice said Pacific Farmer Organisations will play a lead role in the dissemination of the training modules in Fiji with plans to extend to the wider Pacific region following adjustments made to the modules to better suit each country situation.

"We have a number of regional farmer organisations who have already expressed their interest in being involved with the support of PIFON, we see farmer organisations from other Pacific Island countries coming to Fiji for some initial training."

"Currently farmer groups from around Fiji are sending selected members to Tutu Rural Training Centre for training and to observe its system firsthand."

The modules are funded by Australian Aid, through the Australia Pacific Climate Partnership (APCP).

PROMOTING PEACE FRIENDSHIP & NATURE

International Tree of Peace project

A tree-planting ceremony has been held at the Tifajek Mud Pool and Hot Spring by the International Tree of Peace, a project originating from Slovakia in the European Union

Nadi, Fiji — About 35 people took part in the event on Wailoko Road, Sabeto in Nadi, the third-largest conurbation in Fiji.

The International Tree of Peace was created on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the end of World War I to promote the development of peace, friendship and the preservation of nature.

Initiated by Slovak landscape architect Marek Sobola, the international project is implemented by NGO Servare et Manere with the support of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

The implementation of Trees of Peace began in 2018 and currently has 24 trees in 13 countries, Marek Sobola said the idea of the project was also expanding as it begins to gain momentum with supporters from around the world.

"Our big journey to the Oceania region linked with the Tree of Peace is connected with an important Slovak personality, General Milan Rastislav Štefánik, who, among other careers, was a scientist and an astronomer"

"As a member of an international scientific expedition, Štefánik also visited Fiji in 1911. He visited Levuka and Suva. In 1911, an extraordinary astronomical event took place in Oceania — a total Solar Eclipse which was visible from the southeastern tip of Australia, Tonga, American Samoa and Cook Islands."

"Štefánik watched the Solar Eclipse from Tonga on 28th April, 1911. This year marks the exact 111th Anniversary of Štefánik's visit to Oceania and one important scientific stage of his life."

Marek Sobola said: "It would be an excellent opportunity not only to pay tribute to the 111th Anniversary of the Štefánik's visit to Oceania but also a significant and unique opportunity for planting one Tree of Peace. We must become increasingly aware that one of the pillars of peace and prosperity is a clean environment."

He also acknowledged the partnerships between Servare et Manere, Tifajek Mud Pool and Hot Spring and Pacific Farmer Organisations in implementing Trees of Peace in Fiji.

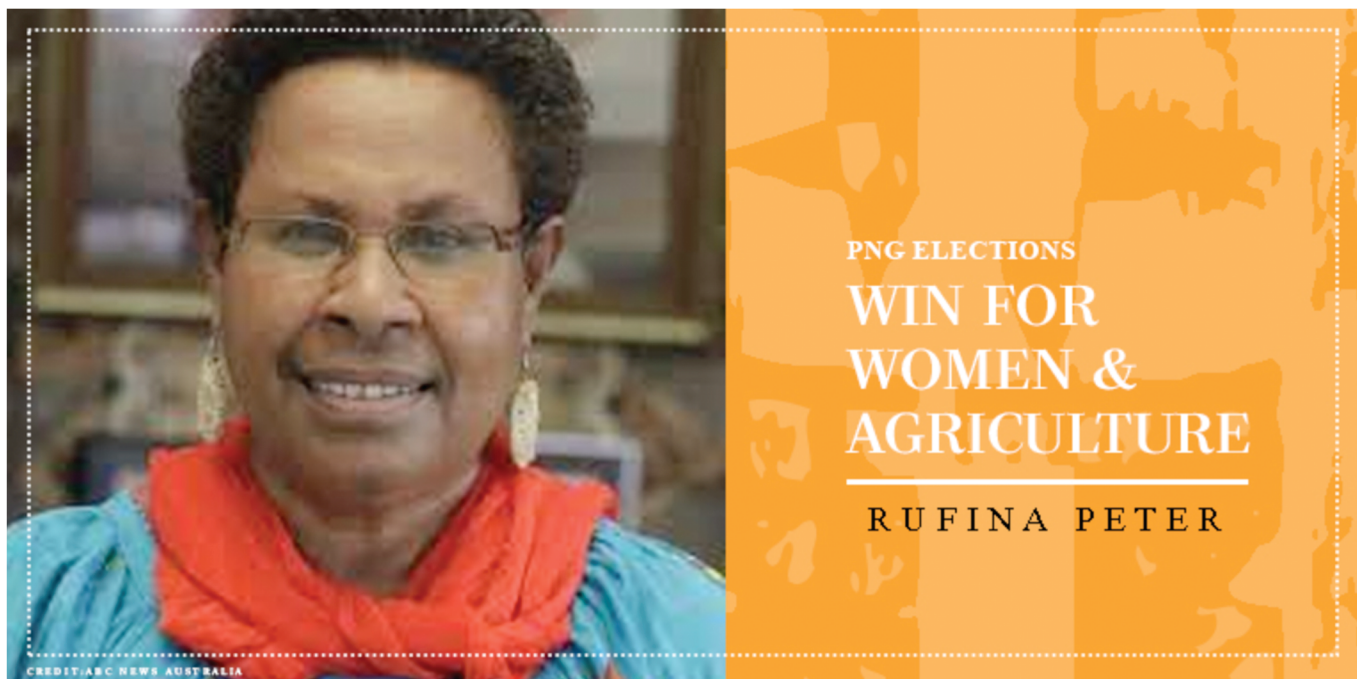


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Rufina Peter makes history

Rufina Peter is the first woman elected to Papua New Guinea's parliament in a decade, before the historic win it was one of only three countries without a woman in parliament



Port Moresby, PNG — Peter who is an agricultural economist has served with the PNG Cocoa Board, the government's Department of Agriculture and Livestock, before moving to the Institute of National Affairs where, among other activities, she served Pacific Farmer Organisations member, PNG Women in Agriculture Development Foundation.

President Maria Linibi shared that a leadership program for women in 2012 supported a crucial call to prepare women for politics.

“She was one of our nominees for the Australian Rural Leadership Program for Women in preparation to joining politics. Several others were nominated but barely made it in this election because of the ongoing violence leading up to and during the elections period which disrupted votes.”

Peter first stood as a candidate in the 2017 Papua New Guinean General Election but was unsuccessful and at the time attributed the lack of success of women in politics to “the general

feeling in the country that politics is a man's world and that women are ill-equipped to become political leaders.”

She was one of 167 women in the 2022 General Election running for the hotly contested 118 seats, compared with 3,458 men.

Peter said the current political environment promotes corrupt practices and there were insufficient resources available for candidates to campaign, citing that tribal leaders play a big role in voters' decisions, and of whom are mostly men.

She was successful in the Central Province Regional seat and became the governor of the province as well as a member of parliament, the second woman to become governor of the province, after Dame Josephine Abaijah.

She stood as a member of the People's National Congress Party and beat Robert Agarobe by 62,361 votes to 58, 917.

FIJI BEEKEEPER CALDEIRA RESIGNS

“It has been personally satisfying”

John Caldeira has resigned as the Fiji Beekeepers Association's secretary and trustee

Rakiraki, Fiji — “My past years of working to build FBA as an organisation has been personally satisfying but it is now time to move on to other challenges.”

Caldeira was instrumental in designing and establishing the Fiji Beekeepers Association's Mentor Programme, Training Programme as well as the initiation of Fiji Beekeepers Association's

Mentor Programme, Training Programme as well as the initiation of Fiji Beekeepers Association's Queen Importation from Australia and Short-Term Scholarships in New Zealand for five beekeepers.

"Most of these projects could not have been achieved without the hard work and brilliant ideas of many in FBA's leadership and members. And our development partners over the years, International Trade Centre, SPC, PIFON, ACIAR, U.S. Embassy, Barefoot College, New Zealand High Commission, and United Nations."

Pacific Farmer Organisation's Kyle Stice said Caldeira has played a critical role in his years of leading and serving Fiji Beekeepers Association as secretary and president while acknowledging his contributions to Fiji Beekeepers and Pacific Farmer Organisations.



John Caldeira has announced his resignation after 7 years of service as secretary and president of Fiji Beekeepers Association CREDIT : Fiji Beekeepers Association

FARMER ORGANISATION PERSPECTIVE

Fair of Diversity, Fair to Many

Visible from a distance and incredibly picturesque with surrounding azure waters of varying shades from the lagoon blue to the deep cobalt, the Solomon Islands is home to nearly 1,000 islands.

The proximity of many of the islands to each other, as well as their remoteness in some parts, conceals just how difficult it is to travel within these beautiful islands.

Flights are possible but expensive, the most widely used mode of transport is by boat. Still hugely expensive with a litre of fuel currently priced from SID\$16-22[1], it is still much cheaper than travelling by air. In some instances, boats are the only means of transport as some islands do not have airports to allow for flights.

For Kastom Gaden Association (KGA), transport continues to be a great challenge, so their activities have had to focus on maximizing opportunities with such high costs of travel and amidstrising fuel prices. One such activity is that of diversity fairs.

As the name suggests, communities within selected provinces are invited to one convenient location to showcase their agricultural produce, and in turn share information amongst themselves to help improve their farming practices at home.

In addition, the farmers are able to obtain technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture and KGA, two organisations who have regularly collaborated to maximise on economies of scale by either travelling together, or allowing representatives from one to represent both their efforts in communities to better help the farmers.

This initiative is supported by a project titled 'Pacific Islands Rural Agriculture Stimulus' (PIRAS) a partnership with the International Fund of Agriculture Development (IFAD), the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Asian Farmers Association (AFA) and Pacific Farmer Organisations (PIFON).

As the Principal Agricultural Officer of the Western Province of the Solomon Islands, Mr. Sipuru Rove, shared 'there was no fuel fund available up until August for the Ministry of Agriculture to conduct their programs in the Western Province, so the collaboration with KGA saw us conduct our programs whilst on the same island visits with the KGA team'.

This special relationship is an example for other Pacific Islands countries (PICs) to follow, especially when fuel prices continue to increase. Covid19 highlighted the importance of connectivity, and this unique collaboration between KGA and the Ministry of Agriculture further highlights this following the pandemic.

For each of the diversity fairs held to date, the first in Tulagi in the Central Province (345 participants), Gizo in the Western Province (658 participants) and the third on Rendova Island also in the Western Province and within the Lokuru community (200 participants), KGA have invited other organisations to participate.

For the latter two diversity fairs, Gizo Market Vendors Association (GMVA), Women in Business (WiB) from

the Western Province, and Plastic Wise Gizo (PWG) were invited.

Members of these organisations are predominantly women [2]. These 3 organisations have received funding from another project titled 'Farmer Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) which represents a partnership with the European Union (EU), IFAD, the Organisation of Africa, Caribbean, Pacific Secretariat (OACP) and PIFON.

Highlighting the collaboration between projects, with PIRAS being a direct response to the Covid pandemic, and FO4ACP being for the long-term focus on improving food and nutrition security, as well as livelihoods, KGA has targeted different beneficiaries for each of the projects. The invitation to PWG, WiB and GMVA to attend the fair provides further diversity on where farmers can seek information, as well as being fair to the donors and partners on how projects can be synergised. Additionally, the three organisations get to raise awareness of their respective organisations to assist them in the tremendous advocacy work, as well as training deliveries, they conduct.

[1] SID — Solomon Islands' Dollars; quoted prices as at August 2022

[2] Total female membership across all 3 organisations sits at more than 75%

FARMER PERSPECTIVE

Raising awareness through diversity



Sarah (L) arrives to the market with her produce

As one listens to Joyce Zoti of Gizo Market Vendors Association (GMVA), one can only feel for the plight of the farmers who have to travel long distances to sell their agriculture produce.

As the newly elected President of the GMVA, Joyce shared that her 250 members also face challenges once they arrive at market.

Given the huge travel expenses, many farmers end up staying for up to 3-5 days to finish selling their produce and most will sleep by their market stalls until they do.

Another concern is the freshness of produce as there are no proper storage facilities to keep the crops.

Through the project titled 'Farmer Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) which represents a partnership with the European Union (EU), IFAD, the Organisation of Africa, Caribbean, Pacific Secretariat (OACP) and PIFON, the GMVA's participation fee at the diversity fairs (organised by the project titled 'Pacific Islands Rural Agriculture Stimulus' (PIRAS) a partnership with the International Fund of Agriculture Development (IFAD), the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Asian Farmers Association (AFA) and Pacific Farmer Organisations (PIFON)), will help to build its membership and advocate for policy changes.

Some of the changes being sought include the GMVA advocating to:

(1) bulk buy produce from farmers so that GMVA can then on-sell the produce whilst the farmers return to their homes after delivering to market, or which the farmers send through without having to travel.

(2) organise accommodation facilities as the majority of the farmers who stay over are female, and it is not safe for them to have to sleep by their stalls.

This involves seeking Government's support for land to be provided for the property to be built.

(3) keep the produce fresh, particularly in the case of the fish brought to market, by seeking support from the Government for storage facilities.

Whilst GMVA raised awareness at the diversity fairs, their members also had the opportunity to sell their produce.

They earned approximately SID\$300-400 (36-49 Euros) nett at the fair, whereas at market, they received SID\$600-800 (72-98 Euros) gross, prior to having to pay expenses for travel and sleeping over.

The market vendor members also enjoyed the opportunity to share information, where they gained technical advice and the like, whilst also being a position to share what they knew with the other farmers present.



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